

261—8.9(15,76GA,chs1180,1219) Innovative skill development activities.

8.9(1) Program purpose. To develop and provide creative training programs that will enhance the skill development of Iowa employees or address a workforce development need. Projects should concentrate on developing skills in new or emerging businesses or industries or address technological skills needed for current or future workers to become or remain competitive in the current labor market in existing businesses. The department will establish priority innovative skill areas for project solicitation annually, prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. These priorities will be established based upon the workforce and economic development needs of the state. These priority areas will be reflected in the request for proposal.

8.9(2) Eligible applicants. Eligible applicants include individual businesses, consortia of businesses, trade associations, labor organizations which represent a majority of the employees to be trained, educational institutions, and other public or private not-for-profit organizations which represent a majority of the individuals or businesses that will benefit from the training.

8.9(3) Length of projects and maximum grant awards. The department will establish the desired project length and maximum grant awards based upon the amount of workforce development funds allocated to the program in a fiscal year and upon the annual priorities set for this program by the board. These limitations will be published in the application packet. Grantees may request extensions to the length of a project.

8.9(4) Allowable activities. Allowable program activities include purchase or development of training curricula and materials; purchase or provision of technological equipment and related materials needed for the delivery of training; activities needed to support a training program including, but not limited to, assessment, recruitment, outreach and applications; training site development; activities needed to develop a training program including, but not limited to, travel, research and development, focus group activities and legal fees; activities designed to creatively address a workforce development need identified by a community that, if successful, can be easily replicated in other communities; tuition and fee reimbursements for students; tutorial and remedial education services; counseling services; coordination services; vocational and skill assessment testing; adult basic education; job-related training; cost of a company, college, or contracted trainer or training services; training-related materials, equipment, software, and supplies; lease and rental of training facilities and equipment; training-related travel and meals; and contracted or professional services. Costs associated with the administration of the project (i.e., fiscal and reporting activities, project supervision, and coordination) are allowable but are limited to 15 percent of the total program budget.

8.9(5) Application procedure. Application packets will be made available by the department. Application packets will outline eligibility criteria, the required application inclusions, and points established for evaluation. Applications must be submitted to the Iowa Department of Economic Development, Workforce Development Coordinator, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Only the applications of eligible applicants will be considered. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year but must be submitted at least 15 days prior to the start date of activities for which reimbursement through this program is being requested. Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received.

8.9(6) Required proposal inclusions. Required contents of an application will be described in the application. Applications must address all information requested in the application packet to be considered for award. If all requested information is not provided, applications will not be considered for funding. Applicants who are denied funding may reapply. Reapplications will be treated as new applications.

8.9(7) Evaluation and rating criteria. The criteria used for scoring the application will include the following:

- a. Sufficient need for the project has been established by participating groups, up to 10 points.
- b. The project will enhance the skill development of Iowa's current and potential employees or will address a skill development need, up to 10 points.
- c. The scope of the project is such that there is benefit and the potential for replicability for several businesses, industries, communities, or individuals, up to 10 points.

d. The project represents a coordinated, collaborative approach to addressing the need or problem identified and involves appropriate organizations, up to 10 points.

e. The project is for a new or emerging industry that will benefit from the activities under this project or it addresses technological skills enhancements that will be realized as a result of this project, up to 10 points.

f. Individuals, industries, businesses or communities will benefit from this project from a workforce development perspective, up to 10 points.

g. The project is feasible in terms of the reasonableness of the budget in comparison to the expected outcomes, other comparable training, and the demands of the individuals, businesses, industries, or communities it will serve, up to 15 points.

h. The expected outcomes will assist the current labor market to become or remain competitive and will foster growth in the local and state economy. This may be evidenced by expected increases in wages or career opportunities of trainees, or by expected competitive advantages to be realized by companies or industries, or by projected enhancement of employment opportunities for communities, up to 10 points.

i. The previous experience of the project operator or service provider is sufficient to ensure quality programming, up to 5 points.

j. Match contributed to the project evidences commitment to the project on behalf of the proposer, up to 10 points.

Proposals will be reviewed by two department staff members. As a part of this review, staff will ascertain which community college district(s) the project corresponds to and notify the appropriate community college president from that district of the proposal for purposes of review and comment. Points will be assigned for each evaluation criteria by each of the respective staff and totaled. The two scores will then be averaged. Proposals receiving an average score of at least 70 out of a possible 100 points will be presented to the IDED board for a final funding decision. The IDED board will base a final funding decision upon the project's ability to address the annual priorities previously established by the IDED and board and upon availability of funding.

8.9(8) Award process. Upon approval of the IDED board, the applicant will receive an award letter which will state the amount and conditions of the award. Awards will be made in the form of grants.

8.9(9) Contract. Following notification of award, a contract will be prepared for execution between the applicant and IDED. The final project application will become part of the contract. In addition, there will be other contract assurances which will include, but are not limited to, the provisions of these rules and applicable state and federal laws. After execution of the contract the grantee may request disbursement of funds on the form(s) prescribed by IDED.